

Member of Parliament Seminar

June 2012



David Dreier, Chairman • David Price, Ranking Democratic Member

Strengthening Women's Leadership in the Legislature

From June 4-8, 2012, the House Democracy Partnership (HDP) collaborated with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to organize a four-day seminar for 14 female Members of Parliament from four HDP partner countries (Indonesia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Peru). This program, which focused on strengthening women's leadership in the legislature with a particular focus on economic development and poverty reduction, was organized in cooperation with the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

The program began with a meeting with a former press secretary to Senator William Cohen (R-ME) to discuss media advocacy on economic development issues. The delegates later met with Ambassador Constance Morella (R-MD), a former Member of the U.S. House of Representatives to discuss her earlier work as chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues. The White House Council on Women and Girls sent a representative to discuss the federal government's support for and coordination of programs for women and girls in the United States.

A highlight of the program for the delegates was meeting Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Verweir at the Department of State, as well as the Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment at USAID. Delegates also met with representatives from Facebook to discuss using digital tools to advance policy goals. Further sessions were held to discuss fundraising for and recruitment of women candidates for public office.

The Co-Chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, Representatives Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) and Gwen Moore (D-WI), met with the delegates to discuss how they work across partisan lines to advance issues of mutual interest to women Members of Congress. Additionally, the group met with Representative Lois Capps (D-CA) to discuss how she advocates on behalf of her constituents, and with Representatives Kay Granger (R-TX) and Nita Lowey (D-NY) to learn more about the budgeting and appropriations process. Finally, the delegation met with Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), a Member of the House leadership team to discuss how she advances women's issues with Congressional leaders.

This was the 14th seminar for Members of Parliament organized by HDP since the commission was established in 2005. HDP has also organized eight parliamentary staff institutes in Washington, D.C., for staff of HDP partner countries in areas such as committee operations, budget analysis, and legislative research. Additionally, the Commission has undertaken regional staff seminars in Kenya, Macedonia, and Poland; three joint MP/staff training seminars; and 29 outbound Congressional delegations to HDP partner countries.